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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /066 W
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R 101248Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6714
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 3130

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, KE
SUBJECT: KIBAKI'S CANDIDACY LADEN WITH MEANING

REF: NAIROBI 2892

1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY FINANCE MINISTER MWAI KIBAKI OF HIS INTENTION TO RUN FOR CHAIRMAN OF KANU IS THE NATIONAL PARTY ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 3 CAUGHT MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE BY SURPRISE. YET, HIS EMERGENCE MAY WELL REPRESENT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SINGLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE KANU REVITALIZATION PROCESS. WHILE KIBAKI IS KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO THE VP MOI, ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO FACTION, THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM A RELIABLE PARLIAMENTARY SOURCE THAT SUCH KIAMBU KIKUYU HEAVYWEIGHTS AS MINISTER FOR DEFENSE JAMES GICHURU AND GEMA PRESIDENT NJENGA KARUME ALSO URGED HIM TO RUN. IF KIBAKI CAN AVOID OPEN IDENTI-
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FICATION WITH THE MOI GROUP PRIOR TO THE ELECTION, WHICH WOULD MAKE HIM UNACCEPTABLE TO MOST KIAMBU KIKUYUS, HE MAY WELL EMERGE AS CONSENSUS CHOICE FOR KANU CHAIRMAN. THIS WOULD ESTABLISH HIM CLEARLY AS HEIR APPARENT TO KIKUYU LEADERSHIP AS NO OTHER KIKUYU IS LIKELY TO HOLD NATIONAL PARTY OFFICE OTHER THAN KENYATTA, AND WOULD MARK HIM FOR A CRITICAL, PERHAPS

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EVEN DECISIVE ROLE IN THE SUCCESSION.

2. KIBAKI'S CANDIDACY, PARTICULARLY IF SUPPORTED BY GICHURU AND KARUME AS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD, DEALS A SHARP BLOW TO THE POLITICAL AMBITIONS OF EX-FOREIGN MINISTER MUNGAI. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT OTHERS IN KIAMBU GROUP THAT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS MUNGAI SUPPORTERS REACHED CONCLUSION THAT THE CONTROVERSIAL MUNGAI WAS A POLIT-ICAL LIABILITY FOR ENTIRE GROUP. SOME QUESTIONED HIS CAPACITY TO LEAD KIKUYUS AND, INDEED, KENYA IN FUTURE. ACCORDING TO GOOD SOURCE, MUNGAI, WHILE BITTER ABOUT BEING DUMPED, DOES NOT AT THIS TIME INTEND TO PRESS HIS OWN KANU CANDIDACY FURTHER. (SEE SEPTEL REGARDING MUNGAI).

3. ANOTHER INTERESTING ASPECT OF KIBAKI CANDIDACY IS THAT HE IS FORM NYERI, IN NORTHERN KIKUYU AREA. NYERI KIKUYUS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN RIVALS OF DOMINANT KIAMBU (SOUTHER) KIKUYU GROUP. HIS SELECTION AS KIKUYU LEADER WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE EXISTING DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN SMOOTHED OVER AND THAT THE KIKUYUS WOULD BE UNITED AS A TRIBE IN POST-KENYATTA PERIOD. KIBAKI HIMSELF DEPLORES TRIBALISM. HE HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD FRIENDS IN PRIVATE THAT THE BELIEVES NEXT PRESIDENT OF KENYA SHOULD BE NON-KIKUYU IN ORDER AVOID HAVING KIKUYU TRIBE SUFFER SAME FATE AS IBOS IN NIGERIA. AS STATED REFTEL, EMBASSY BELIEVES KIBAKI AS KANU NATIONAL CHAIRMAN AND PARAMOUNT KIKUYU LEADER WOULD EXERT MODERATING AND STQBILIZING INFLUENCE WHEN SUCCESSION UNFOLDS.

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4. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ONE PIECE OF THE KANU NATIONAL CHAIRMAN ELECTION PUZZLE WHICH DOES NOT FIT. IN A CABLE FROM CAIRO MARCH 5 FOREIGN MINISTER WAOYAKI ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE POSITION. WAIYAKI IS A KIAMBU KIKUYU WHO SUPPORTED MUNGAI IN THE RACE FOR NAIROBI BRANCH CHAIRMAN IN JANUARY. HE HAS BEEN OUT OF KENYA SINCE HIS ANNOUNCEMENT. IT MAY BE THAT THE KIAMBU GROUP IS HOLDING HIM IN RESERVE IN CASE KIBAKI BECOMES IDENTIFIED WITH MOI GROUP, OR IT MAY BE THAT KIAMBU ELEMENTS WILL USE WAIYAKI WILLY-NILLY TO TRY TO STOP NON-KIAMBU KIKUYU FROM RISING TO TRIBAL LEADER-SHIP. WAIYAKI'S ROLE SHOULD BECOME CLEARER WHEN HE RETURNS TO KENYA. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HIS CANDIDACY WERE WITHDRAWN BEFORE APRIL 3.

5. FOREGOING WAS DRAFTED BEFORE EMBOFF CONVERSATION WITH MUNGAI REPORTED SEPTEL; CONSLUSIONS APPEAR CONSISTENT WITH MUNGAI VIEWS.
MARSHALL

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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